

They hatched an idea

Oyster fest supports African shellfish program

By Matthew Nadler
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When the revelers start slurping down the oysters and sampling the cuisine of top-rated Boston chefs at this year's Island Creek Oyster Festival, most probably don't think about where the money raised for the charitable event goes.

Actually, it goes to making more oysters.

Not in Duxbury Bay, of course, but at a recently opened hatchery in Zanzibar, an Island off the coast of East Africa.

All the money raised at the festival, which takes place Sept. 11, goes to the Island Creek Foundation's efforts to support a shellfish hatchery in Zanzibar.

Last year's festival, according to Shore Gregory, who oversees the foundation for the company, raised \$95,000.

Dr. Hauke Kite-Powell, a research specialist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute and a Duxbury resident, has been working in Zanzibar for 15 years, and the last five years he's focused on shellfish farming projects. Kite-Powell said that he quickly concluded that the best course of action was to open a hatchery.

Hatcheries, he explained, grow seed shellfish, which are then sold to farmers who grow them to maturity. This is the method Island Creek Oysters uses in Duxbury. "There's nothing like this in East Africa," Kite-Powell said.

The hatchery opened six months ago in the community of Stone Town. Kite-Powell said the hatchery's first customers will likely be women working in coastal communities. Many of them are involved in seaweed farming, harvesting it for carageenan, which is used as a thickening agent in products such as ice cream and shoe polish. Part of the program is to teach the women how to integrate the shellfish, which consists of a native oyster and a native clam, into their farming.

Island Creek's involvement was due to



COURTESY HAUKE KITE-POWELL

Hauke Kite-Powell meets with Zanzibar residents during one of his visits to the island.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Island Creek Oyster Festival

WHERE: Duxbury Beach

WHEN: Sept. 11 from 3 to 11 p.m.

WHY: To raise funds for the Island Creek Foundation

HOW MUCH: General admission is \$50, VIP admission is \$150 which includes unlimited oysters and access to VIP chefs and Grey Goose cocktails. Tickets for the festival can be purchased online at www.islandcreekfoundation.org/festival or by phone at 781-934-2028.

what Gregory called a "fortuitous running into" with Kite-Powell. The foundation was looking to get involved in a project that could benefit people lacking food. At that same time, Kite-Powell was looking for "funding and a little bit of knowledge," Gregory said.

Last October, Gregory, Island Creek head Skip Bennett and other Island Creek staff went to Zanzibar with Kite-Powell to take a look at the project. Andy Yberg of Island Creek stayed on for 10 weeks to help things along, Gregory said.

While the money raised at the festival goes to the Zanzibar project, Gregory stressed that Island Creek would continue to focus much of its charitable efforts locally. The company puts 10 percent of

its profits into the foundation, which supports a variety of local and regional groups. "We're really grateful for the support people have given us," he said.

Besides Island Creek, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute has received funding from the McKnight Foundation, and is working with the University of Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania on the project.

In the long run, Kite-Powell said, the hope is that the hatchery will help drive economic development in the area, increase food production and, if it's successful, drive the creation of shellfish hatcheries throughout East Africa.

"Giving is part of the Island Creek culture," Gregory noted. "To do it on this scale is really meaningful."